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mended as being very favorable to pictures. It is one of the beauties of this hall that, when not too dark, it is often the best place in the house to display four or five large pictures; and no room, unless a regular picture gallery, should have more. This hall is still semi-public; and who that is worthy to own a fine painting is not glad to show it to as many as possible? Its wall-spaces are the largest obtainable, and if kept free from other ornament will set off a good-sized picture with a liberal margin. Whenever possible a large painting should be framed into the very construction of the room, as if it were a door or a window; and generally when this is not done it is bad both for the room and the picture.* But if the hall is at all well planned its walls will be found so divided by doors and chimney-breast as to leave just room enough for a considerable painting in each of the interspaces, where when they are hung each can be seen independently of the others, and where the finest perspective will not destroy our sense of the security of the wall itself.

If the hall is not to contain paintings the spaces between openings should be filled by large and handsome articles of furniture. These are also good places for trophies of arms and armor, a large vase or two, a statue of bronze or marble, or, indeed, any work of art of sufficient size and importance. The mantel should be large and handsome.

The ceiling of the central hall is generally kept flat or with rafters, and it is divided from the staircase-well by a beam which carries around the mouldings of the cornice. This beam is supported either by pillars or arches, which, with the balustrades, form a sort of open screen between the room and the stairs. It will be found expensive to have a coffered ceiling on account of its size. Compartments painted, but without any attempt at simulating relief, will generally be found best. The floor should be a parquet, or should, at any rate, have a handsome border of hard woods.

As for the movable furniture of this room, its character should depend on the use that is to be made of it. It is often a substitute for a drawing-room. It is always supposed to be used as an additional drawing-room on great occasions. It is sometimes converted into a music-room. It is at all times a place through which everybody is constantly passing, and where a person may be expected to sit or lounge at any hour of the day. There should, therefore, be a sufficient number of chairs, a table, perhaps a sofa. A book-case can be put here if there is no library (always supposing there is plenty of light), or a cabinet of curiosities, if there is no other place for it. Some of the chairs illustrated are somewhat too stiff for a room that is to be much and variously used; but if the hall

is to be little more than a place of passage they are admirably adapted to it. It should, in any case, be a big and handsome room. A man need have no other such but his dining-room. Economy may reign everywhere else; one may very well do without ornament while he is asleep or while he is talking to a creditor at the front door, and he may, as we have seen, dispense with all apartments of state and reception, the hall taking their place; but there should be nothing

wherein the wall opposite to the landings, which are all on one side, rises sheer to the top of the house, one unbroken surface, extremely hard to manage. If a person could get far enough away from it, it might be imposing; but that is impossible; you stand on the lowest step and look up, up, up, till, no matter how wide the stairs, you seem to be gazing up a chimney-shaft, and your knees ache by anticipation. In one New York house this difficulty is conquered in a

very happy manner. The stair-well is completely vaulted over at the height of the third story, and the pendentives of the two domes into which the ceiling is divided extend far enough down to break the monotony of the lower wall very agreeably, resting as they do on finely modelled corbels. Circular openings framed by egg-and-dart mouldings and filled with pale-tinted glass let through the light. The effect is very satisfactory, and the expedient will, probably, be much copied. ROGER RIORDAN.

THE VESTIBULE AND THE RECEPTION-ROOM.

Nine out of ten houses in New York are very poorly off in the matter of hallway. And yet, so far as a hospitable or an inhospitable impression upon the visitor's mind is concerned, it makes all the difference in the world whether the opening house-door admits him to a generous share of his host's square feet of lot, or to a mere pocket-handkerchief of passageway not big enough to swing the legendary cat in, certainly not big enough to swing on one's overcoat in.

It is so generally true, that it can hardly savor of exaggeration to say that all the houses let out to tenants in New York and by far the greater part of those lived in by their owners sacrifice the comfortable looks of a roomy entry to the necessities of the parlor or the reception-room which opens upon it. This is, of course, not because New Yorkers like a roomy entry less, but because they like a roomy parlor more. They would certainly prefer to have both entry and parlor large enough for looks and for comfort, but they, or the men who build their houses for them, have so arranged matters that one of the two must be sacrificed to the other, and very wisely, no doubt, they prefer to sacrifice the entry.

When people with money to do as they will build houses for themselves to live in, they often manage the matter more skilfully, and,

as we shall see when we come to talk of the hall, the problem is often solved with much taste as well as sense. And were it as common nowadays as it will be soon, to have passenger-elevators in private houses—it is common enough in that paradise of housekeepers, Boston—there would be no difficulty at all in the matter; the hall and dining-room with a reception-room, if needed, might be on the first floor and the drawing-room and library on the second, as in so



STAIRCASE LANTERN.

FROM A SIXTEENTH CENTURY FRENCH MODEL IN THE HOTEL DE VOGNÉ, DIJON.

mean about it then—it is the heart of the house, and that of its owner will be judged from it.

I like best the secluded stair, whose carved arcade gives a cloistral appearance and whose sky-light lets fall a cascade of light to the centre of the house. It is very important that it should have an easy grade and broad landings on every floor; these landings are excellent places for prints, photographs, kakemonos, and the like. A difficulty occurs in most town houses

* Obviously, small paintings, water-colors and prints do not come under this rule

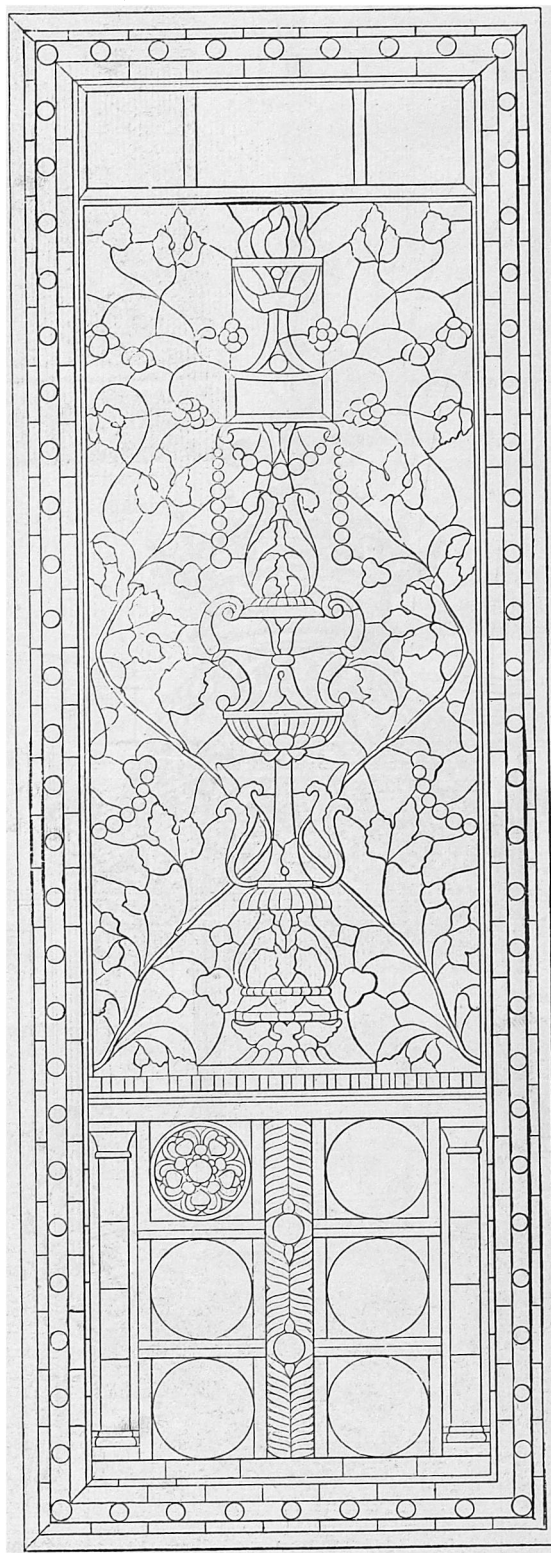
many of the best houses in London and Boston, and then the bed-rooms on the third floor would not be so inaccessible as this arrangement makes them at present.

In all the new houses built by men with brains and taste as well as money, much thought is taken to make the entrance to the house correspond in dignity with the rest. If there is a vestibule, as there often is, the front of the house being divided into vestibule and reception-room, it is given a distinctly useful character by the seat, the small table, the lantern, and the receptacle for canes and umbrellas, but there is seldom room enough for hanging up overcoats and wraps, which are taken in charge at need by the servant, and disposed of elsewhere. But it is in the selection of these few necessary pieces of furniture and in their arrangement, as in the general expression of this enclosure of a few square feet, that we read the character of the house. The late Mr. Willis tells somewhere of his coming upon a house in the course of one of his horseback strolls about the country, and not knowing the owner, but attracted by something in the look of the house and the disposition of the grounds, he rode up to it and took a turn about it. Through the open parlow windows he saw prints after Raphael on the walls, and at once set the occupants down in his mind as people of taste and education. As he had just come into that part of the country to live, and was looking up its advantages, the promise of such neighbors was of no little importance to him.

Even so small a place for taste to work in as the vestibule of one of our New York houses affords, is sufficient as an index; but of course it may happen that it is rather an index to some one else's taste than to that of the owner of the house. Artists are beginning to play such a part in advising as to the furnishing and decorating of our houses, that all we can be sure of when we see plain indications of thought and taste is that somebody with thought and taste has been here. In a certain vestibule of not more than fifty square feet I find on one side a very beautiful Venetian settle of dark wood, a piece which would not be out of place in any museum, and yet unobtrusive, for all its ornate richness. The floor is paved with marble in an antique pattern and bordered with mosaic, but it is nearly covered with an Eastern rug. Umbrellas are provided for by a large and wide-mouthed jar of Italian majolica, a treasure trove, while on wet days the malacca sticks and clouded canes of the elect can be intrusted to the keeping of a pretty rack of wood shaped like the Turkish ones, but painted by Frank Lathrop. The unbroken wall at the left, against which the Venetian settle is placed, is covered with tapestry, and on it hangs a small but sufficient mirror in a dark frame. In front, as we enter, is the doorway leading to the hall, and this is closed by a piece of embroidered velvet caught in Spain one lucky day when the heavens fell and unexpected larks were abroad. And while we stand rapt in the wonder of it we hear the servant's voice at our right, drawing open the folds of the curtain at the right showing us the way to the drawing-room, a curtain as handsome in its way as the other, and harmonizing with it and with the rest of the contents of the vestibule, while yet as suited by its coloring to the drawing-room as the other to the hall. I may add that the wall of this vestibule was covered between the wainscot and the frieze with Spanish leather, one of the richest and at the same time one of the quietest of all wall coverings, and which yet here in America not one of our rich people in ten has thus far shown the taste to employ. Indeed, I have just heard of an instance of barbarism that would be hard to believe, were it not witnessed to by those who know the facts. There was a house in this city which had the walls of one large room entirely covered with magnificent Spanish leather removed by its owner from the walls of the palace in which it had hung since the sixteenth century. Lately the house was sold, and what does the new possessor but strip off the whole glorious investiture of his walls, and throw it aside as if it were so much wall-paper! Happy the upholsterer who got it for a song; there are people of taste enough who will make it a good speculation for him.

The vestibule I have described is an example how a bit of one's house, small in fact, and relatively unimportant, may be made the key-note to the whole. In this vestibule every detail has been carefully studied; and while the effect of it is very pleasant to

the eye and to the mind, it is all the pleasanter for our seeing that nothing has been done nor anything placed here simply for artistic effect. So far as use is concerned, nothing could be spared from the room, unless, it might be, the tapestry on the wall; and that away the place would certainly be much less comfortable-looking in the winter. I forgot to speak of the old Flemish lantern of hammered brass hanging from the ceiling, and which is as useful as it is picturesque. What a childlike simplicity in the manufacture, with not a trace of machine work! and what a confidence it shows in the sufficiency of direct dealing with materials to give pleasure; it is not



LEAD LINES OF VESTIBULE WINDOW IN THE HOUSE OF MR. D. O. MILLS.

necessary for delight that brass should be twisted, bent, and tortured into fantastic forms; the old workmen obtained their most effective results by the simplest means. Our makers of gas fixtures might learn a useful lesson from this vestibule lantern—the style in it is out of all proportion to the cost of it.

But a vestibule may be made a pretty place at far less expense than has been incurred in furnishing the one I have described. Leaving the lantern in its place, let us substitute for the carved Venetian settle a seat made of stained pine—a Dutch design, the back a series of small arcades with slender baluster colonnettes, and carved rosettes in the spandrels—and a chintz cushion—yes, chintz—for have we not come

back in these days to the time when chintzes were as well designed as damask? For rugs no difficulty can be met with in these days when Eastern rugs are so plenty, and when the Scotch—the only people with a sense of color left in Western Europe—are making rugs that rival the Eastern, with a richness of their own. The floor shall be of white pine stained an oak brown, and the walls, above a wainscot of India matting, covered with Japanese chintz, strained but not pasted to the wall, and the seams covered with a narrow fringed gimp. A big jar of Spanish earthenware, with a rich green glaze, such as Mr. Chadwick brings us, shall play the part of umbrella-holder, and some etchings or autotypes in plain frames upon the wall, with a bit of mirror in an old carved frame, or a new one, if no better can be had, will set us up with a comfortable-looking vestibule out of which as much pleasure may, no doubt, be had as the fair owner of the lordlier place I have described gets out of hers.

CLARENCE COOK.

THE DECORATION OF LINCRUSTA.

LINCRUSTA WALTON lends itself readily to decoration at the hands of amateurs, and Mrs. Le Prince, who makes a specialty of such work, has done wisely in preparing for the use of these a manual of instructions. We are enabled, through the courtesy of Messrs. Fr. Beck & Co., to reproduce some of the designs and to make extracts from the proof sheets of the pamphlet in advance of its publication.

A great variety of background effects may be produced on Lincrusta. Gold and silver leaf adhere to it readily; these in turn may be tinted to any shade by thin washes of transparent colored glazing varnishes. Exquisite effects can be obtained by giving to the material some delicate shade or gradation of shades in oil color, and when dry drawing a flat brush, charged with gold or other bronze powder, rapidly and lightly backward and forward over this tinted surface. The raised rib or grain catches minute particles of the metal in powder, with effect of color seen through a film of gold. The brush should be held horizontally, and only as much bronzing liquid added to the gold as will enable it to leave the brush easily. A thin coat of white shellac varnish subdues the brilliancy of these effects, but adds to their permanency.

Mrs. Le Prince says: "Panels for furniture may have backgrounds colored to imitate Boule or other rare and costly wood-work, the ornament in relief being 'picked out' from this in varying shades of green or red-gold bronze." Imitating any kind of woodwork is not to be commended, although decorative hints may be borrowed from this or any other material. For gilded ebony effects the following directions are given: "Lay first a coating of brown dryer, then cover entire surface in gold bronze. When dry varnish with white glazing varnish, and pass over this an even layer of black oil paint, to which has been added a little beeswax dissolved in turpentine, and enough brown dryer to make the paint adhere well; rub away quickly this mixture from the more prominent parts of relief with a soft cloth, folded so as to present a tight rounded surface, letting the gilding show through, more or less at will. Very minute ornament may be brought out by using a small rag, just damped with turpentine, wrapped tightly around the first finger; the lightest touch with this is sufficient to displace the black paint, only, as the mixture given above dries quickly, it is well not to cover too great spaces at once with it. When thoroughly dry polish with a soft brush and a flannel cloth."

Metallic effects are produced as follows: Oxidized silver—cover in silver leaf, or, if preferred, in one or both silver bronzes. When using bronze powders a previous coating of brown dryer economizes the powder and enhances its effect. Glaze the silvered surface with white shellac varnish; when dry rub a brush well charged with dark blue gray oil color into all interstices of the ornament in relief, as well as upon the background, leaving the color thickest upon those portions of background more immediately surrounding the raised ornament; now remove the color from highest points by rubbing with a soft cloth tightly folded, and pass a clean brush over those parts in lower relief that require to be left in half